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Policy and Program of the Protestant Churches

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THE last two decades have witnessed what amounts to a revolution in the attitude of the Protestant churches towards industry. Prior to that time, the churches as a rule took little account of the organized human relationships within industry, and had few purposeful contacts with its great affairs. They had scarcely begun as yet to examine its unchristian aspects and the effects of these upon the happiness and well-being of the masses. Only its adventurous minds were at work on the concept of an industry motivated by a concern for human welfare and organized on Christian principles.

But manifestly a new day has dawned and a new spirit is in the churches. It came so quietly that few were aware of its presence, or that the churches had struck their tents, until the summer of 1920, when the Interchurch World Movement issued its Report on the Steel Strike of 1919. Then came, a few months later, the Pastoral Letter on the Open Shop Movement, issued by the Federal Council of Churches, and a similar protest from the National Catholic Welfare Council. Industry awakened to the presence of a new force in its midst and of what seemed at first to most business men an alien, uninformed and unfriendly force, although it is to be hoped that this feeling will pass away and is passing away. In these and subsequent actions by the churches, a remarkable thing had taken place. Leaders of great industries found themselves called to account by their spiritual advisers, and their amazement and indignation were naturally un-

bounded. A violent controversy ensued, which, while regrettable, was inevitable and necessary if the Church was to have permanent influence. An unfortunate effort were made to stifle the new voice by the use of personal influence, by the financial boycott and by striking at the coöperative leadership of the Protestant denominations. But these efforts served only to arouse the churches, to hasten the work of education, and to consolidate influences which otherwise might have been slow in coming together. The churches are now emerging from a certain discipline of adversity with their function better understood by others as well as by themselves, their program measurably advanced and with a manifest gain in public influence. They will be recognized finally as a sympathetic and constructive force for industrial progress.

The main outline of the industrial policy of the Protestant churches is now fairly well defined, although not uniform. It must be kept in mind that the great Protestant communions are not all federated, that each has a policy of its own which is colored by its historical development, that some are farther advanced and better organized than others in their social relationships, and that sharp divergencies in social theory sometimes make effective co-operation difficult. But points of view pass swiftly from pulpit to pulpit and from church to church in the Protestant group and their teachings tend to converge. The self-conscious organizing center is in the Commission on the Church and Social Service of the

Federal Council of Churches, in which the denominational departments having to do with industry are coöperating. When, therefore, one attempts to state the policy and program of the Protestant churches relative to industry, it must be understood as a statement of the coöperation which exists in the Commission on Social Service, and as an estimate of what exists outside the Commission.

POLICY OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCHES

The industrial policy of the Protestant churches is definitely expressed for the coöperating group and fairly expressed for the others in the so-called "Social Creed of the Churches," which has been adopted in slightly varying forms by several Protestant bodies and by the Young Men's Christian Association and the Young Women's Christian Association. This statement follows:

Resolved: That we reaffirm the social platform adopted by the first Quadrennial in Chicago, 1912, and ratified by the Second Quadrennial in St. Louis, 1916. That the churches stand for:

I. Equal rights and justice for all men in all stations of life.

II. Protection of the family by the single standard of purity, uniform divorce laws, proper regulation of marriage, proper housing.

III. The fullest possible development of every child, especially by the provision of education and recreation.

IV. Abolition of child labor.

V. Such regulation of the conditions of toil for women as shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community.

VI. Abatement and prevention of poverty.

VII. Protection of the individual and society from the social, economic and moral waste of the liquor traffic.

VIII. Conservation of health.

IX. Protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational diseases and mortality.

X. The right of all men to the opportunity for self-maintenance, for safeguarding this right against encroachments of every kind, for the protection of workers from the hardships of enforced unemployment.

XI. Suitable provision for the old age of the workers, and for those incapacitated by injury.

XII. The right of employees and employers alike to organize; and for adequate means of conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes.

XIII. Release from employment one day in seven.

XIV. Gradual and reasonable reduction of hours of labor to the lowest practicable point, and for that degree of leisure for all which is a condition of the highest human life.

XV. A living wage as a minimum in every industry, and for the highest wage that each industry can afford.

XVI. A new emphasis upon the application of Christian principles to the acquisition and use of property, and for the most equitable division of the product of industry that can ultimately be devised.

The Federal Council in the spring of 1919 adopted four additional resolutions which have become a part of its social and industrial platform.

Facing the social issues involved in reconstruction, *Resolved:* That we affirm as Christian churches:

1. That the teachings of Jesus are those of essential democracy and express themselves through brotherhood and the co-operation of all groups. We deplore class struggle and declare against all class domination, whether of capital or labor. Sympathizing with labor's desire for a better day and an equitable share in the profits and management of industry, we stand for orderly and progressive social reconstruction instead of revolution by violence.

2. That an ordered and constructive democracy in industry is as necessary as political democracy, and that collective bargaining and the sharing of shop control and management are inevitable steps in its attainment.

3. That the first charge upon industry

should be that of a wage sufficient to support an American standard of living. To that end we advocate the guarantee of a minimum wage, the control of unemployment through government labor exchanges, public works, land settlement, social insurance and experimentation in profit sharing and coöperative ownership.

4. We recognize that women played no small part in the winning of the War. We believe that they should have full political and economic equality with equal pay for equal work, and a maximum eight-hour day. We declare for the abolition of night work by women, and the abolition of child labor; and for the provision of adequate safeguards to insure the moral as well as the physical health of the mothers and children of the race.

Accompanying these resolutions was a statement on The Church and Social Reconstruction. These documents have been interpreted and supplemented by subsequent statements such as that on the Open Shop Movement in January 1921, and the annual Labor Sunday Messages. We consider that these statements form a sound platform for effective action. In the statement on The Church and Social Reconstruction and in other declarations the Federal Council has recognized that coöperation between employer and employee is not limited to any one form of relationships, but includes the unions, shop councils and still more democratic forms, and that a certain freedom of experimentation is essential to industrial progress.

A significant paragraph appears in the statement in Social Reconstruction:

One high value which comes with the participation of labor in management is that it makes possible again the hearty coöperation of all engaged in an industry and a new era of good will. Therefore, along with the rights involved in social justice go corresponding obligations. With the development of industrial democracy, the evidences of which are all about us, and the coming of the short work day, the im-

portance of genuine coöperation in industrial processes and efficient production must be impressed upon large numbers of workers. As the worker tends to receive approximately what he produces, it must become apparent that what he has for himself and family, and the social surplus upon which depend the great common undertakings of society, are directly related to the productivity of his own labor, as well as finally to the length of the working day.

With regard to the open shop, the statement by the Federal Council issued in January, 1921, was a protest against the use of the open-shop slogan to break up labor organizations. This was and is considered to be against the legitimate rights and welfare of labor, and against a sound industrial policy. The Federal Council is convinced of the necessity for labor organization, but it has never stood for the closed shop, and does not favor it. It stands rather against coercion by either side and for educational methods under a coöperative leadership. It does not believe that the 100 per cent union shop is essential to the safety of the union, and it is convinced that to attempt to force it is in the long run against the welfare of labor itself. But not only will a genuine open shop avoid discrimination against members of labor unions as individuals, but it is also quite consistent with regular dealings with unions.

One other important phase of Protestant policy is to seek for coöperation with other religious bodies, especially with Catholics and Jews. This has grown out of two convictions: first, that religious controversy is distinctly anti-social; and second, that there is imperative need of united action on great social issues by the total religious community of the nation. These convictions led the Federal Council to secure coöperation with the Catholic Welfare Council and the Jewish Board of Welfare during the

War, and the same spirit has been expressing itself in coöperation between the same groups on the coal crisis. At least to this extent the people of the nation are now receiving united spiritual counsels in a new and significant form of pastoral letters.

PROGRAM OF ACTION

The industrial program of the Protestant group is now fairly definite but is still in process of development. It is first of all a program of education, which has set out to introduce Christian principles into industry, to educate in those principles all who come within the range of the Church's teaching, and make their meaning clear by abundant illustration. To accomplish this, the entire educational equipment of the churches, colleges, seminaries, church press, pulpits, Sunday Schools and special study groups, is being used. A most significant coöperation in the preparation of educational material has been brought about by the Federal Council's Educational Committee, which includes not only the social service departments of the several church bodies, but the International Lesson Committee and the two Christian Associations as well.

The semi-monthly *Information Service* and monthly *Book Review Service*, issued by the Research Department, are now going to over two thousand pastors, editors, seminary and college libraries, and to leaders of industrial management and of labor. Already several important books, pamphlets and study courses have been given to the churches.

In pursuance of this educational program there has been developed research into industrial facts and happenings, especially into critical situations such as exist at present in the coal, transportation and textile industries. In the main this is directed toward the collection of fact material for the in-

formation of the churches from existing dependable sources of information; but the Research Department occasionally does first-hand investigation where the situation demands it, as, for example, in the Denver tramway strike.

The churches are also studying the unchristian aspects of industry as now organized and managed. The Methodist Federation for Social Service has taken the lead in this undertaking and the new Fellowship for a Christian Social Order will specialize in the same field. A notable conference was held by the Methodist Federation at Evans-ton in May, devoted largely to this problem, and another is announced by the Social Service Department of the Congregational Church.

The final phase of the program is the development of field work. This has taken the form of conferences in industrial centers, of which up to the present time thirty-four have been held. It is contemplated to extend these as rapidly as possible to every industrial center in the United States. The purpose of the conferences is to reach pastors, business men, labor and social workers, and to make whatever contacts are possible with colleges, seminaries, women's organizations and other influential groups. The main effort is to assist pastors to prepare themselves more effectively to interpret Christian principles to industry and to exert their personal influence for Christian leadership in industry. They are organized in groups to study factories at first hand, to read together, to act concertedly in industrial crises. The message of the conferences to business men and the labor councils is fundamentally the same; namely, the platform of the Sermon on the Mount, concentration of human development and opportunity, industry as a service to this end; coöperation instead of fighting; good will and fair dealing. The social service

secretaries of a number of religious bodies are coöperating in these conferences. Progressive business men who are working out these principles in their industries and progressive leaders of labor who believe in them also are being used to present the more technical aspects of industrial organiza-

tion. The Church is learning also that it is a natural convener; and it is holding an increasing number of conferences in New York and in communities in which leaders of industry and of labor come together informally at the invitation of the Church, to discuss together the personal problems of industry.